

Created Uniquely

The Biblical Role of Women



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A Bible study by:

Lamp & Light
Merchandise

Your word is a *Lamp* unto my feet

Psalm 119:105 *&* a *Light* unto my path.



Hello!

Thanks so much for being willing to do this study. I am confident that your time in God's Word will not return void.

I believe much of the confusion around women's roles in culture and in the Church stems from a lack of knowledge. The focus is often narrowed in on an area of the Bible, failing to look at Scripture as a whole. We cannot only focus on what women can't do, or discredit the Biblical constraints.

Feelings are another tricky area . Many people have feelings that aren't supported by Scripture. We must remember the truth written in God's Word is above our feelings. The Holy Spirit will not, and cannot encourage you to go against the written Word of God. God does not lie. The Holy Spirit is one with God, and therefore cannot disagree with God. Keep these Scriptures in mind as you contemplate the role of women.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? I the Lord search the heart and test the mind,
to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."
Jeremiah 17:9-10 (Please read Jeremiah 17:5 on.)

My desire with this study is that you will spend time in God's Word unpacking just how women related to their husband, family, culture, Christ, and the Church. I pray you will walk away from this study able to lovingly defend the roles of women based completely on the Word of God and not the opinions of humans.

I don't want you to just believe me, think as I think, or believe like I believe. I want you to base everything you think on Scripture, and Scripture alone.



You can read more about Meghann and her background in God's Word on her website.

About | Lamp & Light Merchandise
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Introduction

In a culture that continues to erode Biblical truth, it's important that we draw our ideas straight from Scripture. We must always come back to God's Word and audit what is being done around us- both in the Church and in the world. I must be honest with you. If ever there were a topic I would want to run from like Jonah ran from God's instruction to him, this would be it. I've already been opposed more on this topic than nearly any other, and certainly most from within the Church. Yet, I will not back down. The Bible provides very clear instruction, in spite of opinion and culture, I believe in the sovereignty of God's Word. It's important to me because I am a woman. I intend to say what the Bible says. If you can prove me wrong based on Scripture, I welcome you to PLEASE reach out. I want to search the Scriptures together.

I repeat myself on this. Of the highest importance is that we base what we believe on God's Word itself and not on feeling. **Just because we feel something does NOT make it right. Please read Jeremiah 17:9-10 and Mark 7:21-23 if in doubt.**

This topic is vital for us to talk about because I believe wholeheartedly that it's causing division in the body of Christ. Some people deeply struggle to unify with brothers and sisters in Christ who don't hold to Scripture on this. It may be that the Church will function best when these roles are accurately filled.

We are starting in the New Testament, it holds the most direct instruction speaking to the roles of women. However, it is important that we always study Scripture in its entirety to make sure we are coming to the most accurate conclusion possible.

The goal of this study isn't just to give you a bunch of "thou shall" and "thou shall not" instructions. It's also to help you formulate a mindset of what a good and godly woman looks like from stories in the Bible. Although the Bible is written by males and largely to and about males, it isn't silent on women. Many of the authors of the Bible seem to have a deep appreciation and recognition for the role of women and the help they give.

When your heart rebels at the thought of serving, please remember Jesus. Jesus came to serve and not be served. He had every right to demand to be catered to and glorified, yet He didn't. He emptied himself on our behalf. Willingly.

Your background coming to this study may be different than mine. I want to tell you, I did not always hold a Biblical view of the role of women. Through much study of Scripture, my heart was deeply convicted to either accept all of God's Word or none of it. We either trust that He knows best or we deny that. My prayer for you is that regardless of background, feeling, or experience, you will be willing to build a viewpoint of this important issue based on the truth of the Bible.



I would like to share with you a quick overview of what I have learned while creating this and studying God's Word on this topic over the last few years. I hope you will test my takeaway to the Bible in the pages of this study.

God created women because He saw a lack in the life of man. No helper was found for Adam, and so Eve was created. She was made from Adam who was created in the image of God. Women are made in the image of God. There is a very distinct difference between male and female. Cultures that do not serve the LORD try to erode this, however it's an absolute and unchanging truth.

When Eve was created there was no stress between her and Adam. There was no command that he was to rule over her. When Adam and Eve gave into the deception of the enemy everything changed.

The curse for sin was not just pain in bearing children, but also that Eve's desire would be for her husband, and he would rule over her. We see this still at work today, just as we still experience pain in having children.

As we journey into Scripture we see both dysfunction and faith. Women who do well, and women who do not. Women who fear the LORD certainly stand out as examples to imitate. Sarah, Rahab, Hannah, Esther, Ruth, Deborah, Huldah, Abigail, and many others before we ever get to the New Testament. We see women who work hard, who earn a living, who trade, and make a profit. A woman who judged the nation of Israel, women who are part of God's plan of helping His people, and women who deeply trusted the LORD.

We don't see women serve as priests, women in positions of the primary leader of God's people, or women set above God's people as queens (the kings were all men). We see a few women that do some pretty unconventional things- sometimes these stories aren't stated as being good or bad! (Think Lot's daughters and Tamar.)

We don't see women who go against the authority of their husbands or father presented as people who fear the LORD.

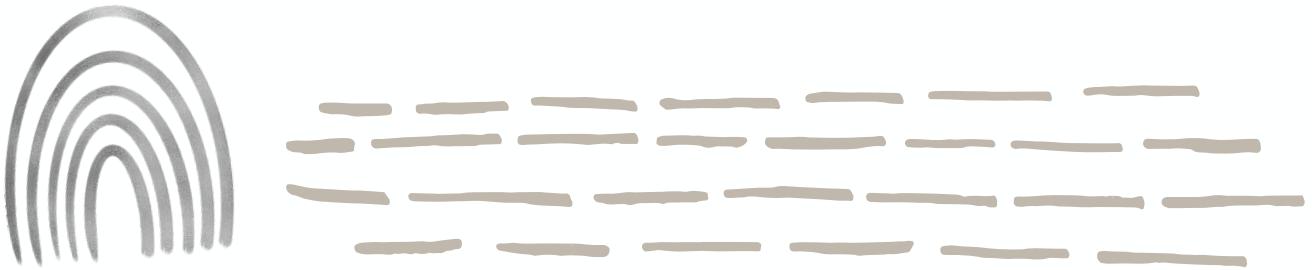
All of the wisdom of Proverbs points to the honor of women who fear the LORD, are not quarrelsome, don't go astray from their marriage, are not adulterous, who are not ill-tempered, they are discrete and modest, and kind and compassionate.



These traits carry on into the New Testament as desirable traits in a woman. We see women treated **very** well by Jesus. He is compassionate to them, He heals them, He acknowledges them, He is supported by them, He is anointed by them, fed by them, served by them, and deeply loved by them. Jesus is birthed by Mary, rejoiced over by Elizabeth, spoken over by Anna at the temple, obedient to Mary and Joseph. As Jesus starts His ministry He listens to Mary and performs His first recorded miracle. He is followed by several women who support Him from their own means, resources, or money. He regularly interacts with women, always with the utmost kindness, respect, and acknowledgement of their faith. When Jesus goes to the cross for our sins He is mourned by the women who loved Him. When Jesus rises from the grave women are there to witness it; they are instructed to share this good news! They aren't the primary 12 disciples of Jesus, but they are a consistent presence throughout His ministry. They are not sent away or relegated to doormat status. **Just because they don't lead, doesn't mean they aren't esteemed.** This may be the primary sentence this study is built around. Not because I pulled verses to fit that narrative, but because that IS the truth found in the pages of the Bible.

When the Holy Spirit is poured out upon the people in Acts 2 women are present. They are gathered and praying. They are gifted. The Joel 2 prophecy that is fulfilled in Acts 2 INCLUDES women. The promises and blessings were for the daughters too. Women were expected to obey the commandments of the LORD, serve the Church, and be honest and truthful (and accountable if they weren't).

There are very specific instructions given about the position of women within the order of the Church and the family. These instructions are given to maintain order and good function, not because women are less than. Women were deceived and Paul makes a point of stating that to connect all the way back to Genesis. The instructions given to and about women are consistent throughout the letters written by various men (Paul, Peter). None of the men who led the Church contradict each other, every spot of instruction is clear that it's for the whole Church and not a particular people or place. Timothy traveled in ministry. The letters written to him support the role of women in the Church. He would have traveled to many different cities where the Church was and brought these teachings with him.



Women are to play a supporting role, consistent with what God created them for. They are to fall in line under their husbands as the Church falls in line under Christ. These commands are not contingent upon the woman's husband being a believer or follower of Christ. As long as an unbelieving husband will live with his wife, she is to stay married. Her children are clean and accepted. She should try to win her husband without words by her good and pure behavior. Women are to make themselves beautiful by how they act, not by focusing on how they look. They are to be filled with the fruits of the Spirit and to love their husbands and children. They are to be busy at home managing their household. They are able to work outside of their home, yet they are not commanded to work outside of their home. Lydia was a dealer of purple cloth, Priscilla was a tentmaker along with her husband. Women labored side by side for the sake of the gospel, had the Church gather in their homes, and faithfully served the Church. They are mentioned by name, spoken highly of, and with great regard. Priscilla, with her husband, explains the way of God/Jesus more clearly to Apollos. Women are told to train and teach other younger women. They are told how to care for their families- both immediate and distant.

They are not to teach, exercise authority over a man, or speak during the Church gathering. But, they are in no way second class, worthless, or jobless! The instructions given for the roles of women are for the order of the Church and the family. Rather than bucking these, we would do well to ponder why. Perhaps God has a reason. His ways are, after all, higher than our ways.

Women of high standing and authority in the Greek culture accepted the Gospel. They had position, intelligence, and importance. However, that didn't change the way the body of Christ, the Church, was to function.

God-fearing women have a wide scope of opportunities to serve. They are to learn and operate in the body of Christ. They have a beautiful and important role to play in their homes and with their families. They are not doormats. They are not second class.

They are loved, accepted, and called to labor for the gospel. Side by side with their male counterparts, without ever desiring to take the God-given role of a man.



Women in the New Testament



Women in the New Testament

We're going to start by looking first at what the Bible has to say from the New Testament. The Bible truly has much to say on this topic. We simply have to decide if we are going to stand firm on God's Word and subject our thoughts and decisions to it, or if we will try to fit God's Word into our culture.

Paul and Peter both speak to this, and their ideas seem to agree. What they wrote is supported by the account of Acts.

Before Acts, we see how Jesus treated women. He had compassion on them, he healed them, he defended them, and he taught them. He also had women serve him, provide for him out of their means, listen to him, and love him.

When we speak on the many roles that women had and how Jesus lifted them up in a culture where they were less, we do well. But, if we leave it there and fail to include the instructions for proper functioning within the body of Christ, we fail. We should NEVER seek to paint a picture and make a case that Scripture does not uphold.

The truth is, there are many things women can do, and a few they can't do, per Scripture. It's up to us to decide where our focus will be.

Once we go through the Scriptures that provide instruction to women we're going to look at the lives of some individual women of Scripture and do a mini-study on a few of them.

Worth noting also is the many times Paul mention and kindly references women in his letters.

Nothing indicates he was a harsh male chauvinist. In many of his letters, he greets women, shares greetings from women, and in Philippians, he pleads with women to agree in the Lord. This is worth noting because it speaks to him as an individual, and highlights his attitude towards females.



1 Corinthians

"Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God."

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

"For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But all things should be done decently and in order."

1 Corinthians 14:33-40

1 Corinthians 14:33-40 may be the hardest for us to take. Women should be silent in the churches? Are we really supposed to take this literally? Ask yourself as you go throughout Scripture if this idea is, in fact, supported. Ask yourself why God may command this? Is there perhaps a reason, such as a call to action for women to ask their own husbands what they desiring to learn. I know these are tough Scriptures. They are very contrary to what most of us have seen done. Try to view them through the lens of all of Scripture and remember that much of Christian life in this time frame was done in a casual sense- over a meal, women gathered at the river, in the town square. I don't believe this is a "do not talk" order for women for all of life because Scripture does not support that. Rather than getting upset about when we aren't to talk, let's focus on not missing what we should be learning in that time, and focus on when we are supposed to speak! As seen from Anna's interaction with Mary and Joseph at the temple, there certainly is a way that women can speak to others for their building up.



1 Corinthians

Please also read 1 Corinthians 7.

Go through the verses from 1 Corinthians and make lists of what women should and shouldn't do based on these Scriptures.

Be specific. For example it says women should pray and prophecy. Don't forget to list those on the "do" side. Also include examples such as where women should go on the "do" side- i.e. attend church.

Do this

Don't Do This



Notes



1 Timothy

"I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control."

1 Timothy 2:8-15

"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."

1 Timothy 3:1-13

"Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity."

1 Timothy 5:1-2





1 & 2 Timothy

"She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work. But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. For some have already strayed after Satan. If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows."

1 Timothy 5:5-16

"I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well."

2 Timothy 1:5

"But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth."

2 Timothy 3:1-7





1 & 2 Timothy

Go through the verses from 1 & 2 Timothy and make lists of what women
should and shouldn't do based on these Scriptures.
Be specific.

Do this

Don't Do This





1 Peter, Ephesians, Colossians

"Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."

1 Peter 3:1-7

"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

Ephesians 5:22-33

"Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them."

Colossians 3:18-19





1 Peter, Ephesians, Colossians

Go through the verses from these books and make lists of what women should, and should not do based on these Scriptures. Be specific.

Do this

Don't Do This



*Let your beauty come from a
gentle and quiet spirit.*



Titus

"Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled."

Titus 2:3-5

Go through the verses from Titus and make lists of what women should and should not do based on these Scriptures. Be specific.

Titus is one of the best places of instructions for women with clear expectations, and beautifully outlined roles! These verses are worth studying more deeply. Use an online study tool like Studylight.org. I encourage you to look into these verses with the interlinear Bible tool and study each word more thoroughly.

Do not miss the very important why at the end of this passage! "So the Word of God may not be reviled." That's some pretty serious instruction. Our behavior could cause God's Word to be reviled?

We have to make sure we're on the right side of this.

Please make sure you include that women ARE to TEACH younger women!!

Do this

Don't Do This



2 John

"The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love."

2 John 1:1-3

(Read the rest of the book, it's one short chapter!)

This is the only letter included in Scripture that is specifically addressed to a woman. It is written by "the elder" who we know was John. It may be that he calls himself the elder because of his age, or his position in the church. Read this letter as if someone had written it to you.

How would you feel?

What would you wish to remember?

What would you want to make sure you told a friend?



Women in Culture

Another line of thought I have heard in regards to the case for women being able to serve in leadership positions in Church is that of ability and position.

The train of thought is essentially that women are gifted in many areas. Their talents are put to full use outside of the Church. Why should they be limited within the Church?

My answer is simple. Because the Bible says so. The Bible does not change. Just because we reason that it is a good idea, God does not agree. His Word does not agree based upon all of the text we have read.

What is fascinating, this same argument could very well have been made in the early Church. We are sometimes inclined to think of all women prior to our modern age as having not held position or education. But, that simply is not true. Please look up the following Scriptures and write down what is said about the women mentioned.

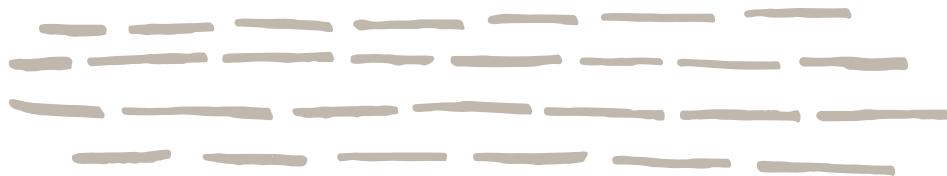
In this very time frame, Paul wrote the letters we already studied to the Churches. Although these women were important outside of Church (and important to the Church) it did not change the order in which the Church was to function.

*Although two examples come from Acts 17, notice they are in different locations.

Acts 13:48-52

Acts 17:10-12

Acts 17:10-12





Word Studies

To know that we understand correctly, it is essential to go back to Greek, the language the New Testament was originally written in.

Pages are given for taking notes. Consider using a study resource like studylight.org to study these words in the interlinear Bible. Trace them throughout Scripture.





Word Study

diákōnos pt. 1

Most often, **diákōnos** is translated as "minister or servant". However, in 1 Timothy it is translated as "deacon".

This can be an issue if we don't understand the role of a deacon in the Church

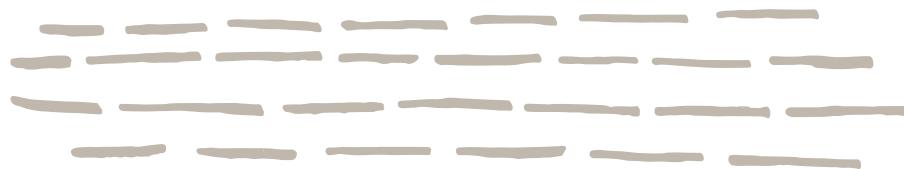
Phoebe is called a **diákōnos** in Romans 16:1.

Please read the whole first part of Romans 16. Observe how Paul speaks about the ladies listed! He says Prisca (Priscilla) risked herself for him. He instructs Phoebe be welcomed and helped.

Underline the names of the women mentioned in the following passage.

"I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well. Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you."

Romans 16:1-16





Word Study

Diákonos pt. 2

Understanding what Diákonos really means it very important. We want to be careful to let the Bible define deacon, and not what we may think of a deacon as.

Definitions of Diákonos

Thayer's Definition:

1. one who executes the commands of another, esp. of a master, a servant, attendant, minister
 - a. the servant of a king
 - b. a deacon, one who, by virtue of the office assigned to him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use
 - c. a waiter, one who serves food and drink

Strong's

Probably from διάκω diakō (obsolete, to *run* on errands; compare G1377); an *attendant*, that is, (generally) a *waiter* (at table or in other menial duties); specifically a Christian *teacher* and *pastor* (technically a *deacon* or *deaconess*): - deacon, minister, servant.

Mounce's

servant, minister, a person who renders service and help to others, in some contexts with an implication of lower status; also transliterated as deacon, a trusted officer of help and service in the local church

I have included all of these definitions for Diákonos because I feel it is important to create a very accurate understanding of this word.

Of interest is the use of the word Diákonos in Philippians 1.
(Emphasis mine)

"Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,
To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi,
with the **overseers** and **deacons**:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ."
Philippians 1:1-2

Please look at the words in bold. Deacon is, of course, translated from Diákonos. Overseer is a different word, we will look at it as well.



Notes

Word Studies



Word Study

Diákōnos vs. epískopos

I believe the nuances of 1 Timothy are the key to understanding the role a woman may hold in the Church. The difference between a deacon and an overseer is important. Women CAN serve the Church as deacons. They cannot serve as overseers.

Please read 1 Timothy 3.

In verse 11 ESV says wives. The word is "gynē" and can be very faithfully translated as woman or wife. Here, at least in my Bible, they use wives as if to describe the characteristics of the wife of a man who is serving in this role. In verse 12 the instruction about men having only one wife is written in such a way that the faithful translation is wife. He must be the man of only one woman.

However, because of Phoebe, we know that women can hold the position of deacon. Is it possible that verse 11 is describing the traits of how a woman who is a deacon should act?

There is no such confusion when it comes to overseers. They are to be the husband of one wife, the man of one woman. This word is never used to describe a woman anywhere else in Scripture. It's used in both these verses, in 1 Timothy and a very similar list of qualifications in Titus 1:7. Both times it is very clear that men are the ones expected to hold these positions.

The word **epískopos (Strong's #1985)** is translated to overseer in Philippians 1, 1 Timothy 3, and Titus 1. The definition is as follows.

Thayer's

- 1.an overseer
 - a.a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian, or superintendent
 - b.the superintendent, elder, or overseer of a Christian church

It is clear to see from these examples there is a difference between a deacon and an overseer. It is important for us to recognize that a deacon served, but wasn't appointed over people in the way that an overseer was/is.

In no way does a woman being a deacon contradict any of Paul's other letters.



Word Study

prostátis

We are going to look back at Romans 16 again. When Phoebe is called a "patron" in the passage from Romans 16 (v.2), the word is "prostátis".

This is the definition taken from Studylight.org Thayer's definition.

- 1.a woman set over others
- 2.a female guardian, protectress, patroness, caring for the affairs of others and aiding them with her resources

This is the only time this word is used in Scripture.

It can mean "supporter or helper" as defined by Mounce.

We know those are roles women already had since creation!

No doubt, Phoebe must have been an outstanding Christian woman who was faithful to the Word and set an example in her behavior. If you look again at 1 Timothy 3:11. She must have met the criteria.

She certainly was spoken highly of by Paul.

In Romans 16:3 Paul includes Prisca as a fellow worker in Christ Jesus and says she and her husband risked their necks for his life. He acknowledges a lady named Mary who worked hard for the Church in Rome. He offers a greeting to a woman who was a mother to him, he also greets other women kindly.

These are simple, yet important things to notice so we develop a well-rounded view of what a Christian woman truly looks like, and how she is treated by brothers in Christ.





Notes

Word Studies



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Word Study

To teach or not to teach?

Showing ourselves diligent in Scripture is considered a noble thing. It's important to dig further if something doesn't make perfect sense. We see Paul tell women not to teach in 1 Timothy, yet in Titus, he tells them to "teach what is good".

So which is it?

Context is important. I also believe looking into the original language (Greek here) is helpful. The words used are not the same. Let's check this out.

Let's start with the word used in Timothy where Paul says he doesn't permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man. The word is "**didáskō**" (**Strong's #1321**).

I encourage you to go and look this up for yourself, and to read all of the verses associated with it so you will have the best understanding on your own. It's used several times in regards to Jesus teaching in the synagogue on Sabbath day, and in general teaching of the people. It's used when Peter and John teach in the temple in Acts 5.

It's used in 1 Timothy to instruct women not to teach.

Please read 1 Timothy 2:8-15 again.

1. What does 1 Timothy 2:11 say a woman should do? Look this verse up using and interlinear Bible study tool. Write the word and definition for "learn" and "quiet".

-
-
2. Look up 1 Timothy 2:12 using the interlinear Bible also. What word is used for "authority" and what is the definition?
-
-

The word "didáskō" is used one other time to speak of a woman teaching in Scripture.

Hold onto your hats, this is crazy!

Revelation 2 is the other time this word is used to speak about a woman and it is NOT good.

Read these Scriptures from Revelation 2:18-29. *Bold emphasis mine and shows the word translated from "didáskō"



Word Study

To teach or not to teach?

""And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. "I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is **teaching** and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. Only hold fast what you have until I come. The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"

Revelation 2:18-29

If that doesn't make you pause... Please know I am not saying every woman who has ever gotten up and taught men is causing them to commit sexual immorality. I'm not, because that's not what Scripture says. But, I do encourage you to carefully think through what Scripture does say.

1. What was the woman Jezebel doing? What was she given time to do? What was the church at Thyatira accused of doing? (v.20)

2. Women are Biblically allowed to be a prophetess. One other woman in the New Testament is called a prophetess. Who else is called this and is it positive or negative?



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Word Studies



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Word Studies



Word Study

To teach or not to teach?

Let's move on to our next word to study which is the "DO" teach that Paul gives to women! Titus 2:3-5 is where we are looking next. Older women are instructed both to "teach what is good" and to "train" younger women. Let's check out both of these words.

"Teaching what is good is translated" from the Greek word "**kalodidáskalos**" (Strong's #2567).

Here is how it is defined:

"Thayer's

- teaching that which is good, a teacher of goodness

Strong's

From G2570 and G1320; a *teacher of the right*: - teacher of good things."

We're also going to check out the two words that make up this word.

"**kalós**" essentially means good and beautiful. It is used to describe a tree bearing good fruit, good soil in the parable of the sower, and a good deed done to Jesus by the woman who anointed him with perfume before his death.

"**didáskalos**" means teacher. The root of this word is the word "didáskein" (Strong's #1321) which we have already studied.

To train or encourage is "**sōphronízō**" and is used only once in the Bible, in this verse.

- It means to restore one to his senses
- to moderate, control, curb, disciple
- to hold one to his duty
- to admonish, to exhort earnestly

1. Do you feel based on Titus 2:3-5 that women are to teach what is good?

2. Who are women to teach? How do the definitions of the words meaning that they were to teach and train the younger women fit with the attributes of God fearing women?



Word study

hypotássō

A widely misunderstood concept is that of wives submitting to their husbands. Studying this Greek word is sure to cast much light on this. The word that is most often used when "submission" is rendered, is "hypotássō". It is used in Ephesians, Colossians, Titus, and 1 Peter. The mention of women learning with submissiveness in 1 Timothy 2:11 is the word "hypotagē", and the root of this word is "hypotássō".

Strong's #5293

"Thayer's

- 1.to arrange under, to subordinate
- 2.to subject, put in subjection
- 3.to subject one's self, obey
- 4.to submit to one's control
- 5.to yield to one's admonition or advice
- 6.to obey, be subject

A Greek military term meaning 'to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". In non-military use, it was "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden."

Understanding that submission is about order is incredibly important. It is important for the Church, for husbands, and for wives. To fully function as God intended, we need everyone willing to fulfill their God-given roles.

Thinking of submission in terms of military order has drastically changed my thoughts, When someone is an enlisted member of the military we, do not view them as docile, weak, or trampled on. They are well trained, well equipped, and well disciplined. They have a job to complete. They have commanding officers, but they each have a very important role to play in making the military operate as it should. Good commanding officers lead well. They are not lazy, cruel, or unprepared. They often times have someone above them to answer to, just as husbands answer to Christ.

Rather than trying to figure out how we can ditch submission, we should do our best to understand it, and fall in line under our husbands as if to Christ.

1. Look up the dictionary definition of submission. Does it agree with the Biblical definition? Record the definition here and compare.
-
-
-



An Example & Encouragement

Let's look at an example from our culture that I believe shows this well. In our country, we have teachers get degrees based upon which grades they intend to teach. It isn't a bad thing to get one or the other, it's simply different. We recognize the absolute importance of elementary educators. We value them and think their jobs are very important, and absolutely needed. We recognize they are trained and well equipped to teach kids many valuable skills.

Women are allowed to teach half of the church. Think of it a bit like an elementary education teacher. If your child's kindergarten teacher suddenly started complaining that she didn't feel like her talents were being used to their fullest in kindergarten, and she felt she should be teaching high school because she didn't feel important as a kindergarten teacher, you might be a little offended right? She also couldn't simply decide she was going to do that. She would need the proper degree. Hopefully, like me, you look at this and think - kindergarten not important?! Kids learn to read, write, cut, basic numbers...truly, half of these skills we use on a daily basis, are taught in kindergarten.

So, is kindergarten worthwhile for someone to teach? YES!

I am not deeming women as equivalent to kindergarteners, or even young in the faith. This is simply an example, please don't read too much into it.

Ok, back to our example. If a person who is well equipped and trained to teach a particular group doesn't want to teach them, or feels it is demeaning to do so, it creates a gap and problem. Not only that, but just as kindergarten is important, so are well-trained women. **Well-trained mamas impact several human beings daily for the kingdom of God.** Every woman who is trained up well in the Word, in loving their husbands and children, and in running their household is an extremely valuable Kingdom asset. Not only do they cause the world to speak well of Christians, but they also allow their husbands to serve more effectively. They train up a godly next generation in their homes, and they equip the next generation of women to do the same!





An Example & Encouragement

**When women are busy trying to fill the role of a man,
there is a neglect of the role that women are created to fill.
This creates a void that is felt across culture.**

If you vacate your role as a mom and a wife in favor of trying to do something better, something more glorified, the gap you will leave is substantial.

It's felt into the next generation. Both in your own family and the women younger than yourself. I believe across much of our culture this is currently happening. It's up to you and me to fix this in the church by being willing to wholeheartedly obey God, even when we feel that His Word is offensive.

If it doesn't start with us, where will it start?

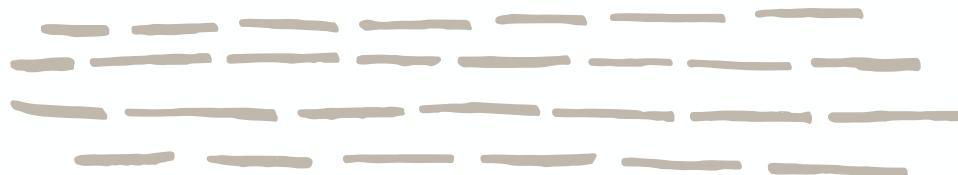
If we're not willing to obey, who will?

The Church was NEVER supposed to look like the world. It is supposed to be a light to the world. We are not supposed to look at the world and see how women of the world act, and decide to replicate what we see in the world, inside the church.

We have entirely missed the boat on what God commands if this is our thought process.

Will you join me in saying that to teach half of the people is enough?

Will you join me in trying to do well with the immense, and at times overwhelming, God-given role we have been created for without trying to take on what we are not created for?





Review

1. Describe what a deacon is based on Scripture.
Is this how you previously thought of a deacon?

2. Look up 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-16. What conclusion do you come to from these about the role of Church authority?

3. Based on the verses you read from Timothy and Titus what qualities are important for women who have husbands who serve in Church leadership positions?

4. How do you feel Christian women can best show submission to their husbands while being a helper to them?

5. Explain how 1 Corinthians 11:8-12 relates to the Church and the role of men and women.



Notes

Word Studies



In Defense of Paul

You see, I feel a bit defensive of Paul. He is sometimes painted in our culture as this woman-hating monster or a man from another time who simply doesn't get it. But, I don't think that's who Paul is at all. He was a faithful servant of God to the entire Church, women included. He was eager for women to help the church and be a part of the Church, but not at the sacrifice of order in the body of Christ. Please, please, don't give in to our fit-throwing culture and say "because I can't do everything a man can do I will do nothing".

The church NEEDS you to serve. Jesus served. Complaining about where and how we are to serve is simply not being like Jesus. Jesus emptied himself. He was a servant through his death. He washed the feet of those he taught. When others were sending the children away from the most important man to ever walk this earth, our Lord brought them to himself. He blessed them and said that we ought to become like a little child to enter the Kingdom of heaven. I can't imagine the view of children being the lesser work as consistent with Jesus' heart.

Paul had likely seen examples of life done well with women walking in their God-given roles, and he had likely seen the chaos and dysfunction that comes when they don't. The Greek/Roman culture probably would have been comparable to our own in this regard. Paul could see the peril in this, and he didn't want that for his sisters in Christ, or for the Church as a whole.

1. Does what Paul wrote to and about women make you struggle with him? Do you feel like he shows honor and respect to women who labor with him?

2. Have you learned anything about Paul that you didn't notice before? Explain.



The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Read: Acts 1 & 2

The Holy Spirit was not just for men. And praise the Lord for that!

"And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;
even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy."

Acts 2:17-18

Peter is quoting from the prophet Joel. You and I live in these last days. Nothing in all of Scripture prevents us from being filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesying. We should earnestly desire this!

1. Look at Acts 1:12-14. Who was in the upper room and what were they doing?

2. Who was eligible to take the place of Judas? (Acts 1:21-26) Does it seem worth noting here that only men were eligible for this role?

3. What specific references are made to women in the prophecy that Peter quotes in Acts 2?

4. How did life in the early church look? (Acts 2:42-47)





In My Life Application

Spend time going over your own life and heart in regard to the section we just studied in Acts.

Be honest with yourself about areas that need to change to reflect Scripture.

1. Do I believe in the power of the Holy Spirit the way Acts 2 details?

Is there evidence of this in my life?

2. Does how I gather with other believers look consistent with Scripture?

3. Does anything about what I've learned so far disagree with what I believe? How can I make what I believe match Scripture?

4. Is there anything that has stood out to you? Anything you feel you need to study further?



Women in Scripture

Please go through these Scriptures and list the woman/women mentioned, what they did, and who they were. Note any particular interactions that stand out to you. Observe how they were treated.

Luke 1:26-26

Luke 1:57-66

Luke 2:33-38

Luke 8:4-48



Women in Scripture

Please go through these Scriptures and list the woman/women mentioned, what they did, and who they were. Note any particular interactions that stand out to you. Observe how they were treated.

Luke 10:38-41

John 11:1-44

John 12:1-8

Luke 8:1-3





Women in Scripture

Please go through these Scriptures and list the woman/women mentioned, what they did, and who they were. Note any particular interactions that stand out to you. Observe how they were treated.

John 4:1-42

John 8:1-11



Women in Scripture

Please go through these Scriptures and list the woman/women mentioned, what they did, and who they were. Note any particular interactions that stand out to you. Observe how they were treated.

Acts 16:11-40

Acts 17:16-34

Acts 9:36-43

Acts 12:6-19





Ananias & Sapphira

The story of Ananias and Sapphira is one of the startling horror stories of the Bible, and hopefully, a warning for us to never try deceiving the Holy Spirit. You can read their story in Acts 5. The reason for mentioning their story in this study is this: Sapphira was given her own opportunity to speak the truth. She didn't die when her husband lied to those in charge in the church. She was questioned by Peter on her own. She was a part of the decision to supposedly sell what they had, and give to the church. She was involved in her family's business dealings, and giving. She wasn't in the dark, shut up at home. She knew what was up, and she answered for the sin that she agreed to participate in.

*One flesh, yet responsible
individually before the Lord...*

1. Does it surprise you to have a story like this in the New Testament?

2. Does this story show consistency between God in the Old Testament and the New Testament? Had you noticed before that Sapphira was given her own chance at honesty?

3. What was the response in the Church from this incident?

4. Does this story challenge your thinking about marriage?





Priscilla

Read: Acts 18

Priscilla is mentioned six times in the Bible. Three times in Acts 18, three other times in greetings. (Romans 16:3, 1 Corinthians 16:19, 2 Timothy 4:19)

Read through Acts 18 and answer these questions.

Of note is that Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. This is worth making special note of, because we see a role for women. Sharing the way of Jesus accurately. No other Scripture disagrees with this, and therefore we know that women should share the gospel (this is well supported by other Scriptures), and explain it more clearly when needed.

The Greek word for "explain" is *ektíthēmi*. This definition is taken from [Studylight.org](#), Thayer's definition.

1. "to place or set out, put outside, expose

2. to set up, exhibit

3. metaph. to set forth, declare, expound"

1. Who is Priscilla? Who is her husband? Where is she from?

2. Based on Scripture what do we know about her? Include any details about her occupation or activities.

3. Does anything about her life seem to disagree with the rest of Scripture?

4. List qualities worth imitating from Priscilla's life.



In My Life Application

Spend time thinking over your own life and heart in regard to everything we have studied in the New Testament. Answer these questions.

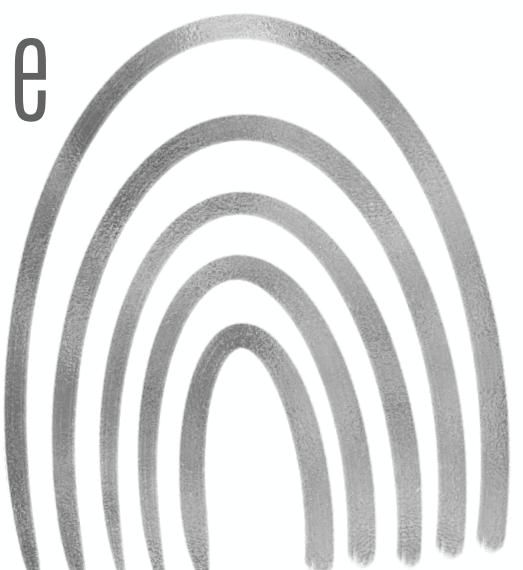
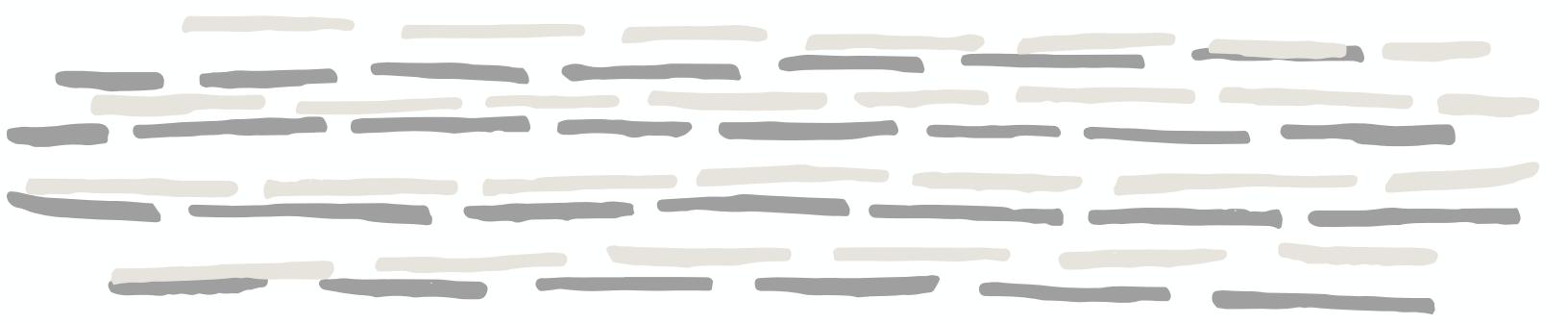
1. Have you seen Scripture obeyed in regards to the roles of women in the Church? Explain.

2. Do you feel that women in the church, yourself included, are treated in a way that is consistent with Scripture? Explain.

3. Does anything about what you've learned so far disagree with what you believe? How can you make sure what you believe matches Scripture?

4. Is there anything that has stood out to you? Anything you feel you need to study further?





Women in the Old Testament



Women in the Old Testament

If you come from some family dysfunction, rejoice because you can likely find an example in the Bible that rivals the craziest family drama you've heard of, or personally experienced.

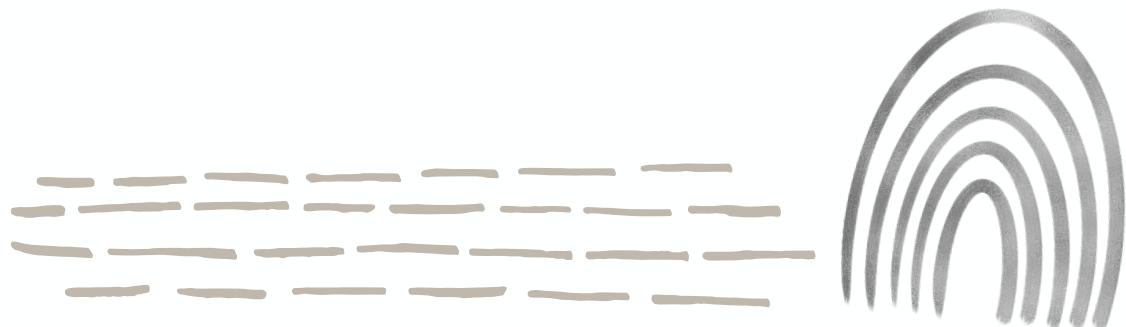
The Old Testament certainly isn't lacking in references to women. Some of them you'll love, and a few you probably won't be so fond of. The Bible contains stories- both good and bad. It holds instructions and Proverbs written about, and directed to women.

A radical call that differs the New Testament from the Old Testament, is in regards to marriage. The picture of Christ and the church is unique to the New Testament. There could be no picture to understand this sacrifice until Jesus gave His very life for us.

The Old Testament is fraught with stories of men who have multiple wives, women who are barren, adultery, abuse, and many more things that most Christians would rather not talk about. Here's the hard truth, are you ready for it?

Every single person in the Bible until Jesus was a fallen human being. Every single one sinned. Every single one showed our immense need for a Savior.

I'm not here to apologize for Scripture. But, I am going to remind you that as you read about women in the Old Testament, you're going to need to remind yourself that they needed the sacrifice of Jesus. The men of the Bible needed the sacrifice of Jesus. When you get a little perturbed, or perhaps downright angry, remind yourself that all of them point to the need for a Savior.





-Eve-

Mother of All Living

Read: Genesis 3

It seems like we always end up back here - the beginning. Sometimes to remember God's incredible ability to create, sometimes to see the patterns He ordained, and sadly, sometimes to see the breakdown that sin caused. Fear, curses, pain, power struggles, enmity, struggling, hard work, and much more all start here. One of the greatest arguments I hear for certain roles women wish to fill or actions they wish to take is *feeling*. It is something we *feel* we should be able to do, or that we *feel* we were created for. Please pay very close attention to the curse of sin. Look at what God says about women. Our desire will be for our husband, and he will rule over us. We often hear about pain in childbearing and most of us have experienced it, or will. Even with every medical intervention around, you cannot be pregnant for a baby, have a baby, feed a baby, and raise a baby without some pain. So, why are we so quick to forget and dismiss the second part of the curse? Recognizing that it exists and that it is a part of our fallen world, will help us to combat sin instead of embracing and advocating for it.

1. Adam and Eve were together when the serpent deceived Eve. Why do you think he spoke to Eve?
-

2. Genesis 3 is the first time humans experience conviction.
What do Adam and Eve do when they experience the effects of sin?
(Notice this is before they have consequences or know what the consequences will be.)
-
-

3. What is Adam's response to God's questioning? Notice that God speaks first to Adam and requires him to answer for himself and his wife (in contrast with the enemy who targeted Eve).
-
-

4. Please write word for word the curse for women from Genesis 3:16.
-
-
-
-
-



Sarah

Genesis

12:10-20, 16, 17: 15-21,

18:1-15 21:1-5, 23:1-3

Space for notes on the next page.

Sarah's story is one that is full of a bit of everything. At times she seems like a great example, at other times a bit less admirable. She was willing to follow her husband in faith to a land they did not know. 1 Peter 3:5-6 says this about her, "For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening."

Although she doesn't make the best call regarding her servant Hagar, it is easy to see how she had the best interest of her husband and son in her heart with what she did. We can certainly see from her example the blessing of being willing to follow your husband where God calls him. Not only was she blessed by having a son in her old age, but her story is also remembered, and her family is in the lineage of the Messiah. We can also learn from her to believe God without laughing, even when what He says seems outrageous. We can also learn to wait for God's best plan, without trying to "help" Him accomplish what He promised .

1.What does Sarai do that Abram asks of her in Genesis 12? How does God deliver her?

2. Whose idea is it that Abram take Hagar for a wife? Why does Sarai come up with this idea? Do you think this was born from a place of feeling like she had failed her husband? (Remember that at this point God hadn't specified that Sarai would have a child- just Abram.)

3. What is the blessing God speaks over Sarai in Genesis 17:15-16? What is her name changed to? Make note of Abram's response.

4. What does Abraham instruct Sarah to do for their visitors in Genesis 18? Where was Sarah listening from?

5.What is Sarah's response to God's message to her?

6.What is Sarah's response when Isaac is born?



notes

Because Sarah and Abraham's story contains so much information,
feel free to use this space to record additional information.



Rebekah

Genesis

24, 25:19-28, 26:34-28:9

Rebekah has a beautiful story, starting with her willingness to serve Abraham's servant who was sent to find a wife for Isaac. She works hard to serve, shows a willingness to leave her family and what she has known to go to a place where she is needed.

Rebekah brings comfort to Isaac after the death of his mother. She is the mother of twins, and although her life isn't free from strife, she does exhibit many godly characteristics.

1. How is Rebekah described in Genesis 24:16? How does her outer appearance match her character? What does she say to Abraham's servant that shows respect?

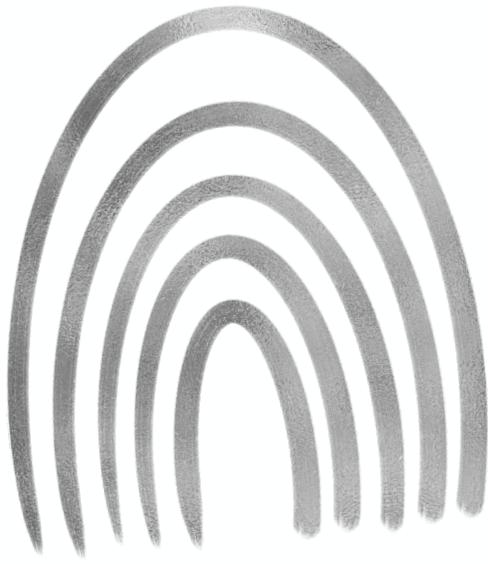
2. What did Abraham's servant do when God provided Rebekah? (24:48)

3. Who ultimately got to decide if Rebekah was going to go? Who went with her? (24:57-59)

4. What does Rebekah do when her children struggle within her? (25:22-23)
How does God respond to her?

5. How does Rebekah help her son deceive his dad? Does this seem like a good idea? Does it produce good fruit in their lives?

6. How does Esau's choice in wives affect Rebekah? What does she desire for Jacob because of this? How does Esau respond? (26:24-25, 37:46, 28:6-9)



Miriam

Read:

Exodus 15:20-21

Numbers 12:1-20

Micah 6:4

Miriam. The sister of Moses and Aaron. She is listed with her brothers as one sent before the Israelites as they went out of Egypt. She spoke boldly to Pharaoh's daughter on behalf of her family when Moses was taken out of the Nile river.

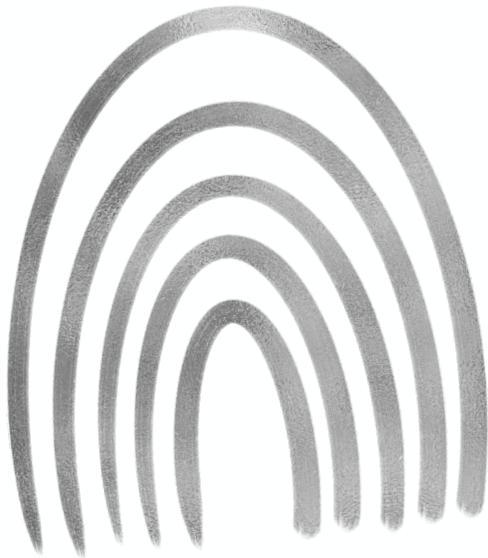
Less exciting to remember is what happened to her when she criticized her younger brother whom God had anointed to lead the people.

1.What is Miriam called in Exodus 15:20? What does she do in these Scriptures?

2. What does Miriam criticize Moses for in Numbers 12? What is her discipline from the LORD and why?

3. How does Moses respond to Miriam's punishment? What does that show about him? What is God's response to Moses?

4. What stands out to you about Miriam? What do we learn from her?



VOWS

Read:
Numbers 30

Numbers 30 gives a very unique look into the positions of authority in the life of a woman, and the instances when she may be without the authority of a man. This chapter could very well be what Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 14:34.

It certainly shows the role of women submitting to their husband's final say. Notice that a woman COULD make a vow. It was only nullified if her husband spoke up on the day he heard of it.

1. When does a woman's vow stand? Do vows seem to hold importance and authority?

2. What is granted to a woman by the LORD if her husband or father makes void her vow?
(v. 5, 8, 12)

3. When a husband does not speak up what does he do? (v.14) What responsibility does a husband have if he makes his wife's vow null and void after the first day he hears of it? (v. 15)

4. Explain the relationship of women, vows, and the authority in her life based on Numbers 30. Does this chapter help you understand submission differently? Keep in mind the early church who was receiving Paul's letters would have had the Old Testament as their only Scriptures. The New Testament was still being lived out and written.



Women in Scripture

Please go through these Scriptures and list the woman/women mentioned, what they did, and who they were. Note any particular interactions that stand out to you. Observe how they are treated, and how they responded.

Rachel & Leah- Genesis 29 & 30

Shiprah and Puah Exodus 1:15-22





Deborah

Read: Judges 4

Deborah is unquestionably a unique Bible figure. She seems to go against the norm. She judges Israel? She goes to a man and gives him instruction? Co-leads the army into war? So, does she defy all that we just learned? I will say that I believe she holds more authority than other Biblical women. But, I also do not believe she is a strong case to toss out the large collection of Scriptures that speak directly to women's roles.

Deborah is called a prophetess, which is not unique to her. However, she is the only woman said to judge Israel. She calls for Barak and gives him an assignment from the Lord. He says he will go, if she will go with him. Because of his response, God gives the main enemy they are pursuing into the hands of a woman, Jael. It seems to be a bit of dishonor to Barak that he wanted Deborah to go into battle with him. We have to notice that about this story. What puts women into the spotlight, seems to be at the expense of honor to a man. Barak should have been confident in his role, and not fearful of the enemy. Does this create a space for a woman to lead if a man will not? I truly can tell you that I do not know the answer to that question based on Scripture. I just want us to be careful to observe this entire story, and its place within the Word of God. It is an exception, not the norm. In the absolute lack of male leadership, are women Biblically able to step up to the plate? I would personally commit this to deep prayer, carefully listen to the Holy Spirit, deeply audit my response with Scripture, ask other strong Believers to do the same, and pray for men to have the courage and ability to fill their God-given roles.

1. Look at Judges 5:7. What do Deborah and Barak call Deborah in their song?

2. Record all details we learn about Deborah from Judges 4:4-5, including her husbands name.

3. What is the exchange between Deborah and Barak in verses 8-9?

4. Do you feel that Deborah is an exception, raised up for a special purpose? Or a greater example of what should regularly exist? Record Biblical examples and Scripture to support your stance.



A woman who fears the
LORD is to be praised



Ruth *The book of Ruth*

Who was Ruth? Give a brief overview of her story and anything about her life that stands out to you as reflective of her role in culture.

Esther *The book of Esther*

Who was Esther? Give a brief overview of her story and anything about her life that stands out to you as reflective of her role in culture. Please also notice Queen Vashti's story and why she was removed from being queen, and the concern that her behavior would spread among other women.



Women in Scripture

Please go through these Scriptures and list the woman/women mentioned, what they did, and who they were. Note any particular interactions that stand out to you. Observe how they are treated, and how they responded.

Hannah- 1 Samuel 1 & 2:1-11

Huldah- 2 Kings 22:8-20





The Excellent Wife

Read: Proverbs 31

This most famous woman, The Proverbs 31 Woman. A mother who is teaching her son what to look for in an excellent wife. I have heard increasingly that this woman is unattainable. And while that might be true, I wholeheartedly believe we should try.

Christian culture that I grew up in placed a heavy emphasis on the stay-at-home mom. There is nothing Scripturally to say this is wrong, but there are multiple Scriptures and examples that say women can be employed gainfully for their families. I don't see evidence that it should be to the neglect of their families, but in addition to maintaining their family as priority . I have personally seen many beautiful examples of this.

In no way does Proverbs 31 paint a picture of a docile, trampled-on, silent wife. She knows her role well and is actively engaged in doing it. She can make confident and wise decisions for her family, to meet their needs, and to think about the future both practically and spiritually. Her most important trait that these actions flow from is **fear of the LORD**.

All she does, she does because of her heart to fear the LORD.

1. What actions does the Proverbs 31 woman take in her own home? (v. 15, 21, 22, 27)

2. What areas do you see the Proverbs 31 woman operating outside her own household? What is she doing in these realms of influence? (Both financially and socially)

3. Please write verse 26. Does this contradict anything we have already studied or does it fit in agreement with other Scripture?

4. What areas do you succeed in being a Proverbs 31 woman? Where do you fall short?





Abigail

Read: 1 Samuel 25

The story of Abigail is a very incredible one! She was married to a not-so-great guy. Yet, we see her go out of her way to protect him and try to cover for his mistake by making his wrong right. For this, she is honored by becoming a wife of King David.

Many Biblical stories have interesting elements. We need to remember that the people the Bible is written about weren't always perfect. Like you and I, they made mistakes. King David is certainly no different. Deuteronomy 17:17 specifically addresses that kings should not take many wives. I don't know about you, but more than one is too many in my book. If you're like me, you may get to the end of 1 Samuel 25 and just wonder why David took multiple wives. I wanted to include this here to highlight the fact that God said not to do that.

Ok, back to Abigail. I want to look at some of the amazing traits that she had and how she was stood in contrast with who her husband was. Observe how she reacted to her husband's lack of wisdom and discernment. Observe how God fights for those who don't take defending themselves into their own hands. Abigail did not gripe, grumble, complain, or shame her husband to his face.

Some of the connections of traits Abigail had are simply stunning when connected to other Scripture. When David blesses Abigail's discernment the same Hebrew word is used in this Proverbs 11:22. "Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman without discretion."

Abigail was not only beautiful in outward appearance, but she also had discretion and discernment.

When 1 Samuel 25:2 says that Abigail was discerning and beautiful, "discerning" could have appropriately been translated as "good" and this Hebrew word often is translated as "good". One example is when God saw what He created and called it good. Another exciting example is when it is used in Proverbs 31:12 to describe an excellent wife, "She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life." Abigail certainly did the best she could to bring her harsh and badly behaved husband good. She saved his life from someone he had made an enemy out of. She couldn't, however, save him from the LORD striking him. She did the best she could to cover his mistakes. She displayed Proverbs 31 attributes. God watched over her, delivered her, and honored her for that.

Now the name of the man was Nabal,
and the name of his wife

Abigail.

The woman was
discerning and beautiful,
but the man was harsh and badly behaved; he was a Calebite.

1 Samuel 25:3

1. List traits that Abigail possessed from verse 3 and verse 33.

2. How does Abigail find out about her husband's response to David? What does she do when she finds out what her husband did (or rather didn't do)?

3. Abigail is willing to take responsibility for her husband's actions even though she had no control over how he acted. How does that show her understanding of her role as his wife? How does God both bless and deliver her after that?

4. How does Abigail respond when she is taken to be David's wife? Do you think her clear humility and willingness to serve was part of what made her beautiful and discerning?





When People Fail

If you read through all that is written about King David, you will certainly come across some stomach-churning stories about women. Sadly, sin was a part of the world since Adam and Eve. We still see this at work in our world today. Not all injustice is immediately made right. Only with the sacrifice of Jesus is there true atonement made for all of these wrongs. Those who do not accept the immense sacrifice of Jesus will face judgement for failure to live how God instructs. We know that is each of us. Apart from the Sacrifice of Jesus, we are surely condemned.

Sometimes in David's story, you see God intervene, such as with Bathsheba. It is also easy to see Bathsheba as a major victim in the story. Other times such as the story of Tamar we see a person intervene on behalf of God to serve justice, which often creates more sin and more dysfunction. I don't have a perfect answer to offer you. I do know for certain that Scripture is filled with real people who made real mistakes, just like you and I. Their need for a Savior was as great as my need and as great as your need. If we did not see the desperate state of the world, and the chaos of sin throughout the Old Testament, the example of Jesus and His sacrifice wouldn't mean the same thing to us. No one lived perfectly before the Lord until Jesus walked this earth. When we read these stories leading up to Jesus arriving on the scene we appreciate just how fallen our sinful nature is. If David, a man after God's own heart, had so much hurt and sin in his family we know there needed to be a Savior to come.

The beautiful thing that we see in Jesus' life is that He continually lifted the downtrodden. He delivered those who were suffering. He took compassion on many women, several of whom did not deserve it. He didn't treat women as less than. He was kind, he helped them, he respected them, and he didn't abuse them. The ONLY perfect human in Scripture is Jesus Christ. You can expect every other Bible story to point to the need for a Savior. You can know that in your life, no matter what abuse, sadness, demeaning, or hardship you have endured that Jesus is the answer. Both for those who made the mistakes in treating you badly, and for yourself in your hurt.

Jesus loves perfectly. He has come to set the captives free! He doesn't want you to live in the bondage of the broken world we dwell in. We know that if our lives are difficult here and now, we can place our hope in Jesus and have a much better future to look forward to. Certainly, it is hard to stomach the wrongs we see and experience. Sometimes we will see justice on this earth, and other times we may not. When our hope is firmly in Jesus we know that He will ultimately be the source of righting these injustices. Nothing you have endured has gone unnoticed by God. Be willing to lay your hurt and desire for justice at the feet of Jesus. We can trust our God to never fail or forsake, even at the darkest moments.



In My Life Application

Spend time thinking over your own life and heart in regard to everything we have studied in the Old Testament. Answer these questions.

1. Did any of the stories you studied illuminate the need for a Savior?

2. How does the treatment of women in the Old Testament vary from the way they are treated in the New Testament?

3. Does anything about what you've learned so far disagree with what you believe? How can you make sure what you believe matches Scripture?

4. Is there anything that has stood out to you? Anything you feel you need to study further? Which Biblical woman did you relate with best, and why? What can you learn from her story?



Notes



Notes

Proverbs

Consider removing this page and cutting these Scripture cards out as reminders.

Charm is deceitful, and
beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears
the Lord is to be praised.
Proverbs 31:30

House and wealth are
inherited from fathers,
but a prudent wife is
from the Lord.
Proverbs 19:14

Like a gold ring in
a pig's snout
is a beautiful woman
without discretion.
Proverbs 11:22

It is better to live in a
desert land than with a
quarrelsome and
fretful woman.
Proverbs 21:19

The wisest of women
builds her house, but
folly with her own
hands tears it down.
Proverbs 14:1

A continual dripping on a rainy
day and a quarrelsome wife
are alike;
to restrain her is to restrain
the wind or to grasp oil in
one's right hand.
Proverbs 27:15-16

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Don't be deceived...

One of the enemy's favorite tactics is "did God really say...?"
He loves to take the Words of God and twist them, as we see he did when he was trying to tempt Jesus.

One of the Scriptures I have heard used to defend women holding any position in the church is Galatians 3:28.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

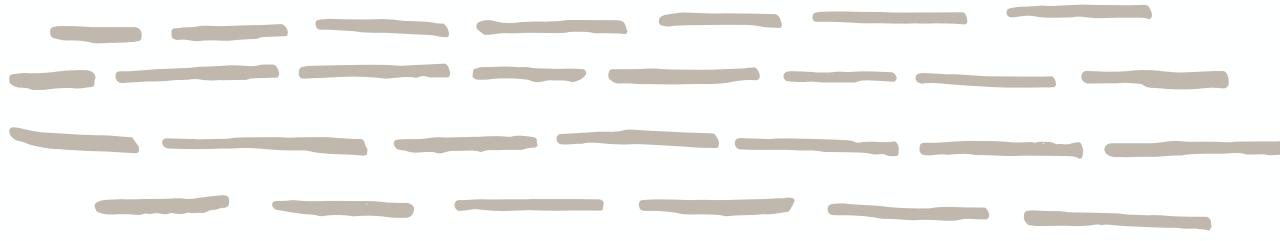
Context is very important. This verse is written in regard to faith in Jesus and baptism into Christ. Just as Satan tried to twist "He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways", to tempt Jesus, so this Scripture is twisted and used to teach something about the order in the Church that it is actually not saying.

There are some extremely cleverly crafted articles and viewpoints out there. They sound good, yet they often neglect one part of Scripture upon examination. It is imperative that we know not only what women aren't to do, but what they are to do, and in context!

As much as you are able, I encourage you to parse apart all of these Scriptures and know each word, and how it applies throughout Scripture. If you are a God-fearing Christian woman, you will likely encounter the need to know these principles very well, and to be able to spot cleverly worded arguments. I encourage you to do everything you possibly can to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as you speak with other Believers on these matters. (Use 1 John 4 as a test of spirits to find out rather or not someone who is claiming to be a Believer is a true brother or sister in Christ.)

Paul authored Galatians.
And Paul authored 1 Timothy and 1 Corinthians.
The latter two speak
DIRECTLY to what we are studying.
We must know Scripture well enough to not be deceived.
We must be able to defend ourselves against the temptation of the enemy and to articulate from the Word of God a confident stance on the role of women in the Church and in their homes.





Without a doubt, there is MUCH for women to do:

Share the Gospel

Work for the Kingdom of God

Get married

Raise children

Prophecy

Sing

Wash the feet of the saints

Pray

Learn

Attend Church

Teach women

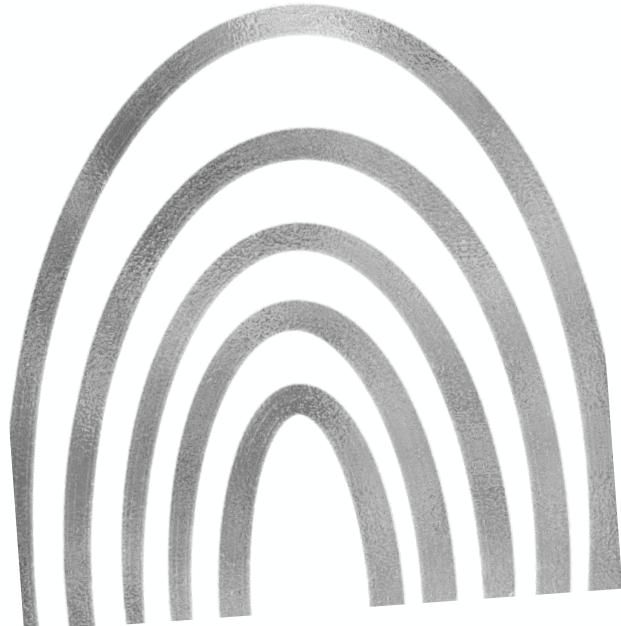
Train women

Worship the LORD

Trade

Make money

What can you add to this list based on Scripture???





Conclusion

Based on everything you have studied, please write an overview of the God given role of a woman who fears the LORD. Base your conclusion on Scripture.



study notes



study notes



study notes



study notes



study notes

Thank you!



for completing this study. It is, without a doubt, an intense topic both in the Church and the world. We have to be so careful as Believers that we are not conforming to the patterns of this world, but rather always being transformed by renewing our minds in Christ.

Do not be afraid to actively serve and engage in every Biblical role that God has given to women. Do not allow the extremes on either side of this issue to taint your view of the Bible, or of standing firmly on the truth of God's Word.

We don't have the excuse of ignorance with the access to deeply study the Word.

Studying Scripture isn't a hobby for some people, but crucial for all Believers.

Our culture accepts divorce. They accept unfaithfulness. They accept and praise every form of sexual sin and confusion.

We MUST BE DIFFERENT. These things have no place in the Church. Don't just think you know Scripture on these issues. KNOW Scripture on these issues.

Always be prepared to make a defense for the hope that you have!

Repentance is key when we realize we have fallen short of God's ideals.

Pride will always try to stop us from repenting or admitting error.

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Let's display humility and grace!

Commit to looking at Scripture in its entirety.

Be a bold voice for the timeless truth of Scripture to women around you!

We have to hold a strong line on this in a culture that is trying to erode the family, the Church, and our testimony.

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Romans 12:2

Be intentional about modeling your life and relationships after the women you see in Scripture who feared the LORD.

Find godly role models (and be one!) that fit the Titus 2 description and relationship.

As I wrap up writing this study I am more convinced now than I was before of the need for a study like this. The role of women can't be glazed over, avoided, or brushed under the rug. It is after all, instruction for half of the Church and vital to keep all Believers walking in accordance with Scripture. Those who truly love God and His Word will be willing to submit to the truth of Scripture. We must stop being cowards. Be bold. Be willing to obey. Be willing to be God-fearing wives and mothers who diligently and faithfully seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

"The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon
you and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance
upon you and give you peace."

Numbers 6:24-26

A very special, extra thank
you to my sister Sage for
helping me edit!
Her offer to help me with
these studies was truly an
answer to prayer.

Thank you sister!





1 Peter 3:4

Let your adorning be the
hidden person of the heart with
the imperishable beauty of a gentle
and quiet spirit, which in

**God's sight is
very precious.**